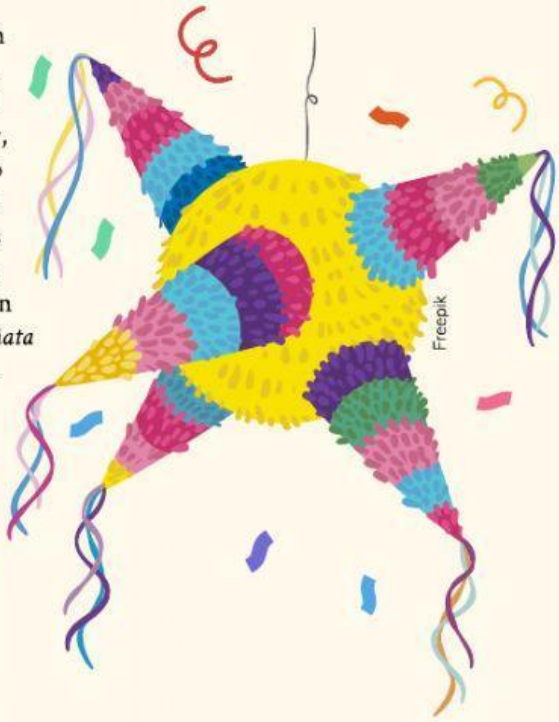
Language Through the Arts

Social Studies

Have you ever played with a piñata?

The History of *Piñatas*

A *piñata* is a container that is decorated and filled with sweets, toys, or fruit. It is often in the shape of a star, animal, or popular character. The *piñata* has become a symbol of Mexico and many countries in Latin America. However, it actually has Chinese origins: the explorer Marco Polo brought the Chinese tradition to Europe and a bishop named Diego Soria brought the tradition to America. Towards the end of the 1500s, Diego Soria gave Christian masses during the eight days before Christmas, with the intention of spreading the religion to the natives of Mexico. The *piñata* was a part of this religious mass, often filled with fruits. People would try to break it with a wooden stick, because they were considered free of sin if they were able to break it open. The *piñatas* were in the shape of a star back then. *Piñatas* became very popular shortly after that. In the UK, piñatas often take the form of a donkey that is filled with sweets. Some believe this represents a cruel image and that *piñatas* should take other forms different from animals. In modern times, *piñatas* are an important part of many children's parties in Latin America.



Source: British Council (2017). The history of piñatas. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/2QnZFZ0

- Have you ever hit a piñata? Where? When?

- Imagine you could make your own piñata. What shape and colors would you choose?

Fix these incorrect sentences to make them correct according to the reading.

- Piñatas first appeared in Latin America.
- The Jewish faith was the first to use piñatas.
- Piñatas are often filled with money.
- In the US, piñatas are often shaped like donkeys.
- Now piñatas are an important part of parties in China.

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